

Holy Assumption Russian Orthodox Church,  
Rectory  
Kenai  
Kenai-Cook Inlet Division  
Alaska

HABS No. AK-39-C

HABS  
AK,  
9-KEN,  
1-C-

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

ADDENDUM  
FOLLOWS

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, DC 20013-7127

Holy Assumption Russian Orthodox Church -- Rectory  
Mission and Overland Streets  
Kenai  
Kenai Peninsula Borough  
Alaska

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PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
HOLY ASSUMPTION RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH  
RECTORY

HABS  
AK,  
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1-C-

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Location: Mission Street, Kenai, Alaska.

Significance: The oldest building on the Kenai Peninsula, the rectory was constructed in 1882 as part of a campaign to improve the housing of Russian Orthodox priests. The wood-shingled building is constructed of logs, laid horizontally.

Description: The 40'-0" x 21'-0" rectory has a two-story front-gabled center section, flanked by one-story side-gabled sections. The building is constructed of 6"-diameter logs, covered with wood shingles. One exposed portion of a wall reveals logs that are not hewn flat on the exterior; the logs are squarenotched at the corners. The gables are clad with horizontal boards. The roofs, originally wood-shingled, are covered with corrugated metal. All of the window sash has been replaced with single, fixed sash. There is a small gabled vestibule in the front. Two one-story shed-roofed additions to the rear were removed in 1969.

The house was originally divided into two rooms in each end, a room opposite the entry, and two rooms in the second-story portion. The two rooms in the west end have been opened into one. There was originally a brick Russian stove between the center and east room, which has been removed. The floor was originally dirt; this was replaced first by split poles and then by planks in the 1920s, and in 1969 by a concrete slab when the foundations were replaced. At that time, a bathroom was installed in the northeast room, and the stairway was moved from the kitchen to the east room. In 1979 or 1980, the doorway at the west end of the second level was added to provide access to a fire escape. In 1983, when modern insulation was installed, the occupant removed the original insulation, which was 5" of dirt laid on the first-floor ceiling. The yard, at one time neatly fenced, has lost its definition. In the front it is covered with gravel.

History: The building was constructed in 1882, as part of Bishop Nestor's building program to obtain improved dwellings for priests. The rectory is strikingly similar to the one at Unalaska, which was built at the same time (HABS No. AK-37-B). Mooser and Pissis, architects from San Francisco, provided the plans, and Bishop Nestor contracted with the Alaska Commercial Company for the construction (DRHA 2: 172, 174).

The interior was not completed and occupied until 1894. Since then, it has continued to serve as the residence of the priest attending the church across the street.

Sources: Barbara Smith, "Holy Assumption Russian Orthodox Church" National Historic Landmark nomination, National Park Service, 1985; Alaska Russian Church Archives, reel 181, includes plan, front elevation, side elevation, dated 1884; Documents Relative to the History of Alaska, reel 2.

Historian: Alison K. Hoagland, HABS Historian, 1990.